

The Chair, Lloyd Sullivan at 9:00am called the regularly scheduled Selectmen's meeting to order. Those present included Jenifer Landman, George Lagassa (Selectmen) and Russell McAllister (Town Administrator).

Selectmen Issues

Citizen's Petition to Increase Amount of Veteran's Exemption from \$100 to \$300

The TA explained that the DRA (Department of Revenue Administration) and the Town Attorney were both contacted regarding the legality of the petition. The dollar amount of the exemption is set by the legislature and currently there exists no authority to increase the exemption amount. The TA noted that Town Counsel provided a legal opinion regarding whether or not the Selectmen were compelled to place the Citizen's Petition on the Town Warrant. Because the dollar amount of the Veteran's Tax Credit was fixed by statute no vote taken by the Town could alter the statute. Therefore, the opinion reasoned that the Selectmen were not obligated to place the Citizen's Petition on the Town Warrant. The decision to place, or not to place the petition on the warrant rested ultimately with the Selectmen. Even though Mr. Ryan's opinion was that the selectmen did not have to put the citizen's petitioned warrant article on the ballot, Mrs. Landman stated that she believed that the warrant article, legally binding or not, must go on the ballot per discussions in Selectmen training classes.

Ms. Landman noted that the Budget Committee had recommended that the Board hold a public hearing on the Municipal Complex. Lengthy discussion ensued. Mr. Richard Geoselt expressed concern about placing workspace above the Police Department because of the potential for traffic problems. Mr. Sullivan thought it unfair to tie the upstairs renovation to Master Planning for the municipal complex. Dr. O'Kane noted his preference for comprehensive planning over incrementalism noting that good planning equaled good decision making. Mr. Lagassa explained that the original construction of the Police Station foresaw the completion of the second floor for just such a purpose as approved by Town vote at last year's Town meeting. Discussion concluded with the Board scheduling a public hearing on the space planning for the Municipal Complex on January 7th at 7:00pm.

Mr. Lagassa noted that Paul Cutera had asked if the Board could support the Olympic Torch run with a small (\$100) contribution. The Town would receive a replica of the Olympic Torch and a placard holder. The other members supported the effort. Ms. Landman made the motion to approve a \$100 contribution in support of the effort. Mr. Sullivan seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

Mr. Sullivan noted that Mr. Richard Fucci wished to address the Board concerning the option of providing a letter of credit versus a bond with the Town for a project previously approved by the planning board. The Board agreed that a letter of credit would be fine so long as the amount of the letter of credit was the amount stipulated by the planning board and that the Town had first position on the letter of credit. Ms. Landman made the motion to allow Mr. Fucci to secure a letter of credit. Mr. Lagassa seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

TRASH

Joe Arena

Mr. Joe Arena noted that the Board had previously approved a \$1,500 appropriation the Coalition Communities activities. Mr. Arena explained that previous funding supported the mailing costs of educational materials that were mailed throughout the state. Mr. Arena characterized the property tax as socialism and noted that its adoption represented a change in the form of NH government to socialism. Mr. Arena asked that the Board continue its support of TRASH by appropriating an additional \$2,000 towards its efforts to educate the people of New Hampshire. Mr. Lagassa asked whether Mr. Arena represented North Hampton on the Coalition Communities, or TRASH? Mr. Lagassa also asked what were the goals of TRASH? Ms. Landman made the motion to approve an additional \$2,000 appropriation to fund TRASH

activities. Mr. Sullivan seconded. A spirited debate ensued regarding the merits and efforts of TRASH. Dr. O'Kane noted his opposition to a constitutional amendment and suggested that education was a State responsibility. Dr. O'Kane characterized TRASH as a belligerent movement with a lack of understanding of the educational issue. Further debate ensued. Mr. Sullivan called for a vote on the motion to provide additional funding to TRASH. The vote was 1 yes (to fund) and 2 no. (Mr. Sullivan voting yes / Mr. Lagassa & Ms. Landman voting no).

Review Default Budget & Warrant Articles

The Board briefly reviewed the default budget.

Accrued Benefits Liability

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$25,000 to be added to the Accrued Benefits Liability Expendable Trust Fund and to be funded from the fund balance as of June 30, 2002. The current estimated total amount of unfunded vacation and sick leave is \$75,000. Current Trust Fund total is \$32,504.

The TA explained that the target cap for the fund is \$75,000, which will cover the costs associated with employee separation and retirement. As a general practice the Town deposits approved money into the trust funds at the end of the fiscal year in order to preserve cash flow during the fiscal year.

Police Cruiser

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate twenty three thousand dollars (\$23,000.00) for the purchase of one police cruiser for the Police Department and to be funded from the fund balance as of June 30, 2002?

The TA explained that the purchase of a police cruiser is part of the annual cruiser replacement program.

Mosquito Control

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$27,300 to fund the Mosquito Control Expendable Trust Fund and to be funded from the fund balance as of June 30, 2002? The current balance is \$12,700 and the target cap for the fund is \$40,000.

The TA noted that the bills for this past year's mosquito program totaled \$27,300 and the target cap for the fund is \$40,000.

FD Capital Reserve

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$35,000 for the Fire Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund #4 and to be funded from the fund balance as of June 30, 2002.

The TA explained that during the year fees received for ambulance service were deposited into the above trust fund for the purpose of equipment replacement in the fire department.

Tennis Court Reconstruction

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty-seven thousand dollars (\$27,000.00) to be added to the Tennis Courts Capital Reserve fund and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to withdraw the amount of one hundred sixteen thousand five hundred eighteen (\$116,518) to reconstruct the tennis courts. Work to be done includes construction of a new gravel base, new drainage and new playing surface, fencing and water fountain. As of September 2001 the amount in the fund is \$89,518.

The TA explained that this year the Recreation Director was requesting that the remaining amount of money necessary for the completion of the tennis courts be raised. The \$15,000 dollars approved by voters last year would be deposited in the reserve fund in June of 2002.

Highway Truck (one ton) Replacement

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate forty five thousand two hundred dollars (\$45,200.00) for the purchase of a one ton (4x4) pickup truck with plow for the Highway Department to replace the $\frac{3}{4}$ ton pickup truck and to be funded from the fund balance as of June 30, 2002.

The proposed new truck is better suited to street plowing because it is a one-ton vehicle versus the current $\frac{3}{4}$ ton vehicle. The proposed new vehicle will also come equipped with a larger plow. The current $\frac{3}{4}$ ton vehicle is over 6 years old and is requiring more maintenance to keep it running.

Police Radios

Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate \$16,200 for the purchase of digital radio equipment for the Police Department to ensure continued communications with the primary dispatch center at the Rockingham County Sheriff's Department and to be funded from the fund balance as of June 30, 2002?

The TA noted that the County Sheriff was converting its analog radios to digital. Because the County dispatched the North Hampton Police, it made sense to begin conversion of the department radios.

Voting Booths

Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate \$4,000 for the purchase of 20 new voting booths to replace the old voting booths and to be funded from the fund balance as of June 30, 2002.

The current handmade booths are in dire need of replacement.

Air Exchanger

Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate \$34,000 for the purchase of a vehicle exhaust system and its installation in the Fire Department truck bay and to be funded from the fund balance as of June 30, 2002?

The air exchanger is used to vent vehicle exhaust (carbon monoxide) from the apparatus bay in the Fire Station.

Integrated, Windows Based Municipal Software

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate forty seven thousand (\$47,000) for the purchase of windows based municipal software that will integrate, tax collection, general ledger, accounts receivable/payable, cash receipting, building permits and zoning and to be funded from the fund balance as of June 30th, 2002? The proposed software will replace the current DOS based system and be capable of integrating all municipal business functions.

DOS based (16 bit) software (municipal accounting packages) is nearing the end of its lifecycle. Therefore, software company's are moving their technical support, programming support and product development dollars away from the shrinking DOS market and towards the much larger market for windows based products. We are simply following the market to avoid being orphaned.

Pay As You Throw

Shall the Town vote to adopt a Pay As You Throw (PAYT) program that includes Town funded curbside recycling? Thirty-gallon (30 Gallon) trash bags will be sold individually at a cost of \$2.35. Included in the price of the bag are the costs of hauling and solid waste disposal (tipping fee).

PAYT have been adopted and successfully implemented by municipalities throughout New Hampshire as a means of controlling the costs and amounts of solid waste by having users manage their household waste. The less you use the less you pay.

Citizens Petition

On petition of David Chevalier and at least 25 other registered voters of the Town of North Hampton to see if the Town will vote to increase the Veteran's tax credit authorized under RSA 72:28-a, V & VI, from \$100 to \$300 effective April 1, 2002

Modified Elderly Exemption

Shall the Town vote to modify the elderly exemptions from property tax in the town of North Hampton, based on assessed value, for qualified taxpayers, to be as follows:

For a person 65 years of age up to 75 years - \$60,000

For a person 75 years of age up to 80 years - \$80,000

For a person 80 years of age or older - \$100,000

To qualify a person must have been a New Hampshire resident for at least five years, own real estate individually or jointly, or if the real estate is owned by such person's spouse, they must have been married for at least five years. In addition, the taxpayer must have a net income of not more than \$35,000 or, if married, a combined net income of less than \$45,000; and own net assets not in excess of \$150,000 excluding the value of the person's residence.

A public hearing for the increase will be held February 11th at 7:00pm in the Mary Herbert Conference room.

Questions & Comments

Mr. Henry Mixter noted that he and the Conservation Commission were slated to receive the Gulf of Maine Visionary Land Conservation Award for the efforts on the Salt Marsh Restoration Project. The Board agreed to attend the ceremony scheduled for January.

Administration/Business

- a. Minutes - December 12th, 2001
- b. Payroll
- c. Manifest
- d. Seacoast Emergency Response Team Agreement
- e. Cemetery Deeds (signatures)
- f. Appointments
- g. Coakley Minutes
- h. BAN paper work (signatures)

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:30am.

Respectfully,

Russell McAllister
Town Administrator